

New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report

SAU # 12

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Visitation Conducted on: January 21-22, 1998

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Students With Disabilities

(Commendations, Citations, and Suggestions for each school)

Note: *It should be noted that suggestions are not considered corrective actions and therefore are given as technical assistance. The district is not mandated to implement them.*

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SAU# 12

I. INTRODUCTION:

A New Hampshire Department of Education Special Education Program Approval visit was conducted at SAU # 12 comprised of the following schools: Londonderry High School, Londonderry Middle School, South School, North School, Matthew Thornton, and the LEEP Program. The visiting team met on January 21-22, 1998 in order to review the status of Special Education services being provided to eligible students.

Activities related to this evaluation included the close review of all the teaching certifications of special education staff, analyzing of SPEDIS data, and random inspection of student records. Interviews were held with the special education program directors, the director of pupil services, the superintendent, building principals, regular and special education teachers and related service personnel, as time and availability permitted. In addition, the team conducted parent interviews via phone. Throughout the visit the team had full cooperation from the school personnel and this helpfulness was greatly appreciated.

The report that you are about to read represents the consensus of all the members of the visiting team. Please keep in mind that this is a "report for exception", meaning that only exceptions to the N.H. State Standards have been addressed. If a component is not mentioned, that does not mean that the team did not review it; it just means that there were no citations of noncompliance to the Standards found in that particular area.

II. STATUS OF PREVIOUS ON-SITE: *January 1993*

SAU #12 has made many program improvements since the last New Hampshire Department of Education Special Education program approval visitation. It was evident to the visiting team that a genuine attempt to rectify citations has been made by staff throughout the SAU. Based on review of the program approval application materials and existing policies and procedures, as well as interviews with staff and visits to each of the schools, it was the consensus of the team that all of the previous citations have been resolved. The team was pleased to find that additional diagnostician positions were added in 1993 to address deficiencies in the evaluation process. Each special education program director at the building level has taken the responsibility to insure that regular education classroom teachers are included as a part of all teams and that appropriate documentation of such is located in student records. The special education administrators have also worked with staff to insure that student records have all required paperwork including evidence of extended school year consideration, monitoring of progress on IEP goals and objectives and evidence of written prior notice to parents. The team was also pleased to find that the director of pupil services and applicable special education program directors have worked hard to develop in district programs to meet the needs of many students who were previously placed out of district.

Overall, it was the consensus of the visiting team that SAU#12 has addressed and resolved all areas on noncompliance listed in the 1993 report and that much hard work has been put forth to ensure the quality of programming and degree of compliance found in each building. The 1998 team would like to recognize and reinforce the sound philosophy and goals that the Londonderry School District has established and commend all

staff, administrators and the community for the provision of a wide variety of quality programming and resources for all children.

III. ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE:

In SAU#12 there is an enthusiastic, supportive atmosphere for providing all students with quality education in the least restrictive environment. Upon visiting each of the schools in Londonderry, it became evident to the visiting team that there were no major issues of significance noted during their visit. In a variety of ways it was clear to the program approval team that special education in SAU#12 is an integral part of the district's overall programming. There is an enthusiastic, supportive atmosphere for providing education in the least restrictive environment, which is fostered throughout the SAU by faculty, administration, support service personnel, secretarial staff and parents. There is excellent communication between regular and special education staff and between teachers and parents. All building administrators are actively involved in every aspect of their schools and students with disabilities are active participants in all aspects of school life, including sports and extra curricula activities. Staff in Londonderry were consistently described as skilled and dedicated individuals who provide a variety of quality programs for all students.

As noted above, the program approval team unanimously agreed that there were no pervasive problems or issues of significance identified during their visit to SAU #12. Staff in the Londonderry School District have a clear vision of where they are going with special education and considerable time has been spent developing programs to meet the needs of all children. There is emphasis placed on the provision of services in the least restrictive environment and the SAU embraces the philosophy that maximum benefits are derived from providing the opportunity of educational programming for disabled students with non-disabled peers. Special needs programs throughout the SAU are designed to be coordinated with the regular education curriculum with appropriate integration and minimal separation of disabled students in all aspects of school life. Each school has met with a considerable level of success in the implementation of the inclusion model and the community clearly promotes and supports the integration of disabled students with their nondisabled peers. At this time, SAU #12 has many praiseworthy things happening within special and regular education programs and it has taken much effort and input from staff, administrators and parents to bring about such accomplishments.

In summary, the visiting team was impressed with the wide array of quality programming made available to all children within the Londonderry Schools. Specialized methodologies are being utilized for all students and special education programming is being carried out in the true spirit of the law. Any citations that appear in the report that follows are due mainly to oversights in documentation of the special education process, rather than a specific chronic problem.

IV. COMMENDATIONS, CITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

SAU WIDE

Name of Program(s) Visited: All

COMMENDATIONS:

The staff in each school within SAU #12 were consistently described as skilled, highly motivated and dedicated to the teaching/learning process.

Throughout the Londonderry School District there is an atmosphere that encourages teamwork and cooperation.

In each school there is strong administrative support and involvement of principals in special education programming.

The model of a special education program director in each building is exemplary and working well.

The community and school board are commended for the provision of necessary supplies, materials, resources and the facilities to meet the needs of all students in the Londonderry schools.

SAU #12 is commended for their commitment to providing education for all students in the least restrictive environment.

Professional growth opportunities for all staff are on going and encouraged by administration. The result has been specialized methodologies for all children and very impressive instruction in classrooms.

Parents demonstrate support and enthusiasm for both regular and special education programming.

Staff and parents indicate that the superintendent provides strong leadership to the district, he is well respected by staff and administrators and the community.

It is evident that each of the schools has put forth much effort to ensure compliance with state special education regulations.

The special education administrators are knowledgeable, involved in all aspects of programming and a valuable asset to the SAU.

CITATIONS: SAU – WIDE

None

SUGGESTIONS:

The SAU may want to take a critical look at service delivery models district-wide. It appears that at the elementary and high school levels, there is a continuum of placements, yet at the middle school level all students are fully included with no other placement options available.

EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM

Program(s) Visited: Pre-School

COMMENDATIONS:

- LEEP is the first early education program in New Hampshire to become a member of the National Parent Teachers Association. As a result parent involvement in the life of LEEP has increased significantly. Parents serve on a number of work groups including 1) Nutrition, 2) Newsletter, 3) Class Volunteers, 4) Enrichment Fund, 5) Room Parents and 6) Sharing Talents. The LEEP-PTA provided fund for a complete set of playground equipment, video camera, computers and software, books and many other support for the learning center
- Regularly scheduled training sessions for parents provides continuous support for young parents to learn effective parenting skills.
- One per month the entire staff, including aides, meet to review each child's instructional plan for the forthcoming month. Implementation strategies and materials are specifically determined for each activity in every child's program.
- Detailed tracking of student progress for each instructional objective are reviewed on a monthly basis.
- The staff of the LEEP program work on a collaborative basis providing services for each child. The teaming skills demonstrated by staff are at an exceptionally high level of effectiveness.
- The procedures of the program are formalized and clearly articulated, consequently the program is structured with an evident focus on educational progress and results.
- The leadership provided by Lynn Slapsys is outstanding. Under her guidance, an environment of trust and mutual support has been established between the children, their parents, teachers, therapists and administrators.
- The administrative support provided by Ken Brewer has enabled the program to thrive based on sound principles of early childhood education.

CITATIONS: None

SUGGESTIONS: None

MATTHEW THORNTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Program(s) Visited: 1) Self Contained 2) Modified Regular 3) Resource Room

COMMENDATIONS:

- Team coordination and collaboration between special and regular educators is outstanding.
- Strong administrative support is evident at Matthew Thornton Elementary.
- Special education programs are well staffed, which allows for significant direct service time for students.
- Opportunities for inservice training to special education staff regarding inclusion and special education issues are supported and ongoing.
- There is a true commitment to inclusion while still meeting individual needs.

CITATIONS: None

SUGGESTIONS: None

NORTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Program(s) Visited:

1) Special Ed. Classroom

2) Regular Ed. Classroom

COMMENDATIONS:

- Student files are well organized and complete.
- All the students know what their behavioral expectations are and students act accordingly.
- The staff at North Elementary School work together as a team to educate all children.
- There is a strong emphasis on implementing education in the least restrictive environment.

CITATIONS:

None

SUGGESTIONS:

None

SOUTH SCHOOL

Program(s) Visited:

1) Gr. 4 Reg. Ed.

2) Gr. 5 Reg. Ed.

3) Gr. 2 Reg. Ed.

COMMENDATIONS:

- School is positively focused on goals concerning inclusion.
- Special and regular education staff really work as a team, sharing ideas and responsibility.
- Special education students function well as part of the mainstream.
- There is a positive, friendly climate in South School.
- There appears to be adequate staff and the structure at each grade level work well.
- There is good use of support personnel.
- At South School there is a strong veteran staff with a lot of experience, enthusiasm and expertise.

CITATIONS:Ed # 1107.07(c)

1 file: EH endorsed teacher was not part of evaluation team.

Ed # 1109.11

1 file lacked documentation of I.E.P. monitoring.

SUGGESTIONS:

None

LONONDERRY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Program(s) Visited:

- 1) Gr. 8 Reg. Ed. Classroom 2) Gr. 6 Reg. Ed. AIM
3) Gr. 8 PFS

COMMENDATIONS:

- Londonderry Middle School has been very successful in the implementation of the middle school philosophy.
- There is effective communication within each team; the use of common planning time is exemplary.
- The Londonderry Middle School is commended for provision of reading instruction for those students in need of this service.
- Staff are supplied with adequate resources and materials.
- At Londonderry Middle School, there is on going assessment of curriculum, including remedial reading
- The daily advisory period is very practical, useful and successful.
- Providing students with assignment books has proven to be an effective practice.
- All students and staff have good access to technology.
- The CORE Tutor Program is working well for all students.
- Decentralization of staff with particular reference to House Masters has been successful.

CITATIONS:

- Ed # 1107.02(b) 1 file: The referral was not dated; it was not possible to determine if written disposition occurred within 15 days.
- Ed # 1107.05(h) 1 file was missing the written summary report within 45 days of permission to test.
- Ed # 1107.08(c) 1 file: no evidence of LD observation in evaluation report.

SUGGESTIONS: None

LONDONDERRY HIGH SCHOOL

Program(s) Visited:

- 1) Modified Regular
- 2) Emotionally Handicapped Program
- 3) Academic Career Training Program

COMMENDATIONS:

- There is mutual respect between student service, special education staff and mainstream teachers.
- Strong top down support for special education is evident at Londonderry High School.
- The Special Education Program Director is making important changes in the student services program. These changes include: ACT Program/The Buddy System that links regular and special education students in foods and art classes in 1998. This will be expanded to physical education, industrial arts, computers and science in the 1998-1999 school year.
- Changes in curriculum to meet the needs of the students is exemplary. One example is the reading program in which a reading specialist and an English teacher work as a team with common planning time.

CITATIONS:

Ed # 1102.35(a-d) 2 files did not contain transition statements on the I.E.P.

Ed # 1109.01(l-m)

Ed # 1109.01(n) 1 file did not contain evidence of parent signature on the I.E.P.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Improved documentation of transitional and vocational services is needed. It appears that the services are being provided, but there is little evidence in the student files.
- Student services could be located in an area that has more room for conferences and meetings.

OUT-OF-DISTRICT FILES

COMMENDATIONS:

The SAU makes every attempt to provide programming for students within the SAU prior to considering out-of-district placement.

The SAU maintains an open line of communication with out-of-district placements and closely monitors student progress.

CITATIONS:

Ed # 1109.01(k, l) 1 file: IEP did not have transition component.

SUGGESTIONS: None

ADDENDUM

JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM

SAU 12

Student File Review

Case Study Document

Reimbursement Claim Form

Case Study Addendum Form

<p style="text-align: center;">ADDENDUM JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM</p>

SAU # 12

COMMENDATIONS:

The SAU maintains strong communication with the courts and with private facilities.

CITATIONS:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <u>Ed. # 1109.01(e)</u> | 1 file: lacked documentation of consideration/discussion of vocational programming/experiences for student. |
| <u>Ed # 1109.01(l)</u> | 1 file: IEP did not have transition component. |
| <u>Ed # 1109.11</u> | 1 file lacked documentation of regular and systematic monitoring of IEP goals and objectives. The file did contain a report card with grades, but the grades did not reflect contents of the IEP. |

SUGGESTIONS: None